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SUMMER 2025

Retirement Planning Decade by Decade

Retirement planning is a lifelong process. Below are some of the key retirement planning actions you need to be taking from your 20s through your 60s.

Your 20s

Start saving. The sooner you can start saving for retirement, the less you'll have to save overall. If you start saving $5,000 per year at age 25, you'll have just under $775,000 by age 65, assuming annual returns of 6%. Wait until age 35 to start saving and you'll only have about $395,000 — more than $300,000 less. Also, since you're still decades away from your retirement date, don't be afraid to take some risk with your investments. You'll have to stomach some ups and downs, but earning higher returns from equity (or stock) investments now means more money (and less to save) as you get older.

Other steps to take when you're young: start budgeting, avoid debt, and save for other goals, like buying a house. Even if you're not earning a lot right now, adopting healthy money habits today will pay big dividends later in life.

Your 30s

As you enter your 30s, your income is probably heading upward and your life is beginning to stabilize. You may find you can contribute more to your retirement savings accounts than you could in your 20s. As your income increases, consider increasing your retirement contributions by the amount of your annual raise so you don't fall behind on saving. Reassess your savings rate and consider meeting with a financial advisor to make sure you're saving as much as you can — and investing it well.

Your 40s

You're at the halfway point to retirement. If you've been saving for the past 10 or 20 years, you should have a nice nest egg by now. If you haven't gotten serious about saving, now is the time to do so. You'll have to be fairly aggressive, but you still have some time to build a respectable financial cushion. Whether

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Stern's Corner

I am happy to report that Brooke passed her level one Sommelier exam with an 87%. She is heading to Napa Valley for her Birthday to go to a few vineyards and then she will be taking her level two exam in October. It is funny that this is the same kid I used to scream at when she had assignments not handed in during her high-school years. Now I am worried she is taking on too much. I guess the moral of the story is you never stop worrying or trying to parent your kids. I am so proud of her. She also just had her one-year anniversary at work! I feel like just yesterday I was going up for UCF Tri Delta parents weekends.

Many of you know my son, Michael, now works for the Neal Agency, and they represent country star Morgan Wallen. For those of you who do not know him he is a pretty big deal in the country music world. Michael was able to get us VIP passes to his concert, and together we listened to the songs that are constantly played at our home. I realized that in life sometimes roles reverse, time flies, and if you are lucky, your kid grows up and brings you along for the ride instead of the other way around. That night I did not just go to a concert; I have a memory that I will play on repeat for the rest of my life!

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Retirement Planning

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you're an accomplished saver or just getting started, you may also want to consider meeting with a financial advisor to help you make sure you're saving enough to meet your goals and investing in the best way possible.

A special note: people in their late 40s and early 50s are often looking at steep college tuition bills for their children. Don't make the mistake of sacrificing your retirement goals to pay for your children's college educations. Stay focused and on track so your children don't have to jeopardize their financial future to support you as you get older.

Your 50s

Once you turn 50, you have the option to make catch-up contributions to retirement savings accounts like 401(k)s and IRAs. You can save an additional $7,500 a year in your 401(k) plan and $1,000 a year in your IRA in 2025. That's great news if you're already maxing out your savings in those accounts.

Your fifth decade is also the time to start thinking seriously about what's going to happen when you retire — when exactly you're going to stop working, where you want to live, whether you plan to work in retirement, and other lifestyle items. It's also the time to take stock of your overall financial situation. You'll still want to keep saving as much as you can, but you may also want to make an extra effort to be debt-free at retirement by paying special attention to paying off your mortgage, car loans, credit card debt, and any remaining student loans.

Your 60s

Retirement is just a few years away. If you haven't already, you'll want to dial down the risk in your portfolio so you don't take a large loss on the eve of your retirement. You'll also want to start thinking about a firm retirement date and estimating your expected expenses and income in retirement. If your calculations show you're falling short, it's better to know before you stop working. You can make up a shortfall in a number of ways — reducing living expenses, working a bit longer, and even delaying Social Security payments so you get a larger check.

Whatever your age, the key to retirement is having a plan and consistently executing that plan. Not sure how to get started? Please call so we can discuss this in more detail. OOO

Questions for Your Investment Plan

When developing a solid investment plan, there are several questions you need to answer:

What am I trying to accomplish? The beginning point of any investment plan is to determine your objectives. There are three main goals when investing: income, growth, or safety. Which is most important to you? Do you need income to live on now or in your retirement? Are you looking for growth so your investments can provide income later? Is preserving your principal value most important?

When will I need this money? After you determine your objectives, define a timeframe in which you will need the money. This will help you decide whether to use short-, mid-, or long-term investments. If you want to buy a new car within two years, you will create a much different investment plan than if you are saving money for retirement. Your primary concern should be about making investment choices that will be worth as much as needed by the time you reach the timeframe you set for the objectives. It's worth noting that significant growth will likely require at least five or more years in the market.

How much can I invest? Determine a realistic amount of money you can put into your investment plan. Do you have a lump sum of money? Can you make regular monthly contributions? If you want to make regular monthly contributions, consider setting up an account that will transfer money from your bank account to your investment account.

If you have a lump sum of money to invest, you will have many more investment options. This is where asset allocation will come in to play. You will need to decide how much you want to allocate to stocks versus bonds.

How much risk am I willing to take? There really is no such thing as a low-risk investment that brings high returns. If you think about a scale from one to 10, with one being lowest risk and 10 being the highest risk, where do you fall on this scale? This is what will help you decide the types of investments you will be comfortable making. One of the best ways to reduce investment risk is to diversify your investments, even within asset classes. While you will experience swings in value, you will reduce the risk of a substantial loss of your money.

What should I invest in? Your plan should start leading you to certain types of investments. You should research options that meet your stated goals and take the time to understand the pros and cons of each investment. You should narrow your choices down to a few that you really like.

Please call if you'd like to discuss this in more detail. OOO

Finding a Balance between Risk and Return

One of the most basic investment principles is that returns reward you for the risks you take. While investors are often uncomfortable with the concept of risk, it is this uncertainty that makes higher rates of return possible. Some basic investment principles related to risk and return include:

✔ Returns on specific investments are not known in advance. Investors can review historical rates of return, but there is no guarantee that past returns will be indicative of future returns.

✔ There is usually the possibility an investment will not meet your return expectations.

✔ The uncertainty regarding your actual return creates risk. Greater uncertainties typically lead to greater risk.

✔ Investments are subject to many different types of risk. Cash is primarily subject to purchasing power risk, or the risk its purchasing power will decrease due to inflation. In addition to purchasing power risk, bonds are subject to interest rate risk, or the risk interest rates will increase and cause the bond's value to decrease, and default risk, or the risk the issuer will not repay the principal or interest on the bonds. Stocks are primarily subject to nonmarket risk, or the risk that events specific to a company or its industry will adversely affect a stock's price, and market risk, or the risk a particular stock will be affected by overall stock market movements.

✔ There is generally a tradeoff between risk and return. Low levels of risk are the most desirable and typically have lower return potential, while higher levels of risk are typically undesirable and so must offer higher return potential to encourage investors to invest. Be cautious of claims of high returns with low risk.

There are strategies that can be used to reduce the total risk in your investment portfolio:

✔ **Diversify your portfolio.** You should diversify among several different investment categories, including cash, bonds, and stocks, as well as within investment categories, such as owning several types of stocks. A properly diversified portfolio should contain a mix of asset types whose values have historically moved in different directions or in the same direction with different magnitudes. By owning several investments rather than just one, a downturn in any one should not have a significant impact on your total return. Of course, the opposite is also true — if you have one investment with exceptional returns, your total return will be lower than if that were your only investment.

✔ **Stay in the market through different market cycles.** Remaining in the market over the long term helps reduce the risk of receiving a lower return than expected, especially for more volatile investments, such as stocks.

✔ **Use dollar-cost averaging to invest.** Rather than accumulating cash so you have a large sum to invest, invest small amounts regularly. Dollar-cost averaging involves investing a certain sum of money in set amounts at regular intervals. This spreads your purchases over a period of time, preventing you from making one major purchase at high prices. Since you are investing a set amount, you purchase more shares when prices are lower and fewer shares when prices are higher. While a valuable investment strategy, dollar-cost averaging does not ensure a profit or protect against losses in declining markets. Before starting a program, consider your ability to continue purchases during periods of low price levels. This strategy requires the discipline to invest consistently, regardless of market prices, and can help develop a habit of regular investing.

If you'd like to discuss how to balance risk and return in your portfolio, please call. OOO

Kohn's Corner

The summer is speeding by. I wish summer could be controlled with a leisurely speed monitor helping to guide the time. Yes, I am working but having a cooperative market helps relieve daily stress.

In my time off, I am enjoying water aerobics, Pilates, and croquet. All white clothing is required, and the game is like playing pool with mallets.

Biking is also a pleasure because my electric bike flattens out the mountains of West Virginia, where I have been spending some time this summer.

We have had classes on blackjack, craps and a dice game called Bunco. We have also actively supported local charities such as the Humane Society and certain performing arts groups.

I ran down to Florida to wish Mason a happy 5th birthday and back to The Greenbrier just a few days later. Can't miss too many Wednesdays and Friday happy hours. It's a wonderful summer.

Wishing you and your families healthy and safe sunny days.

Eckstein's Corner

This summer, we marked a big milestone—my son's fifth birthday—with a day of adventure, imagination, and non-stop excitement at LEGOLAND. As any parent of a LEGO-loving kid knows, there's nothing quite like watching their eyes light up when their favorite bricks come to life in full scale.

From the moment we got to the hotel, it felt like we had stepped into a world built just for him complete with his first time in bunkbeds, minigolf and pits of Legos that were as big as a small swimming pool. He proudly wore his birthday button, which got him high-fives and special shout-outs from the staff the whole time. We started with some gentle rides, perfect for his age and size, and then worked our way up to the boat rides and even a mini roller coaster.

One of the biggest hits of the day was Miniland USA, where famous cities made of millions of LEGO bricks sparked his curiosity and storytelling skills. He loved seeing the New York City replica and told everyone passing by that it was "My mom's hometown!" Then he started to pick out the other places he wanted to travel together.

We took a break for some lunch and dip in the pool, where he told me that this day was "perfect", gave me a big hug and thanked me. It was a day built on joy, wonder, and a whole lot of bricks—a fifth birthday to remember.

Espinal's Corner

It turns out that the cutest member of our family has remarkable persuasive powers—a skill rarely seen in someone with only four months of experience. Shiroh-our grandson, may still be working on rolling over, but he's already inspired a real estate transaction. That's right, even though he lives just two hours away, his smile-induced gravitational pull proved stronger than any sensible driving schedule.

So, what do you do when FaceTime just isn't enough? You pack your bags, sign a contract and voilà – suddenly you're the proud owner of a condo conveniently close to Shiroh's headquarters.

Of course, there were practical considerations, but for us, this second home was not just a real estate decision—it was a heart decision. It's a front-row seat to the joy of watching our grandson grow, and ability to provide love and support for daughter and son-in-law, two hardworking professionals who are so blessed to have Mimi (AKA my wife, JoEllyn) help care for Shiroh (we all know how expensive day care is). Our new home is a big milestone for our family, and a reminder that some of the best investments are made with love.

Many of you that I've talked to have heard me say, that if I knew grandchildren would be this fun, I would've had them first. And now when he throws that first baseball you better believe I will be there to catch it!

Stay tuned as keep you all posted on Shiroh's next steps-pun intended 😊

Deakins' Corner

This summer we were able to go on a couple of family trips. The first was to Atlanta and Highlands, NC for a wedding. Highlands was absolutely beautiful, set in the middle of the mountains. We did some hiking through waterfalls, zip lining and sightseeing. It was great to experience new things as a family that none of us had done before. Then just last week we finished our summer with a road trip to Hilton Head, SC to visit with my sister and family. The kids had a great time with their cousins, and it was nice to be able to wake up and just walk onto the beach for a few days. Bryn and I especially loved our sunrise walks where we would see all kinds of animals. We even saw an alligator on the shoreline and a deer right on the beach! I hadn't seen my sister for quite a while, so I was really missing her and happy to have some time together.

I feel like I blinked and the summer is over. It's now back to the school grind …and car line. Bryn is now in 7th grade and Cole is in 3rd. Even though they enjoyed summer too, they were both happy to go back to school and see their friends.